

Ibbett

Three Letters from
W.J. Ibbett to his Friend
H. Buxton Forman
in praise of Venus



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THREE LETTERS

FROM W. J. IBBETT TO HIS FRIEND

H. BUXTON FORMAN

IN PRAISE OF VENUS



LONDON

PRINTED AT THE CHISWICK PRESS

1894

THREE LETTERS IN PRAISE
OF VENUS.

*“ Lucretius—nobler than his mood :
Who dropped his plummet down the broad
Deep universe, and said ‘ No God,’—*

*“ Finding no bottom : he denied
Divinely the divine, and died
Chief poet on the Tiber-side,*

By grace of God ! ”

A VISION OF POETS.

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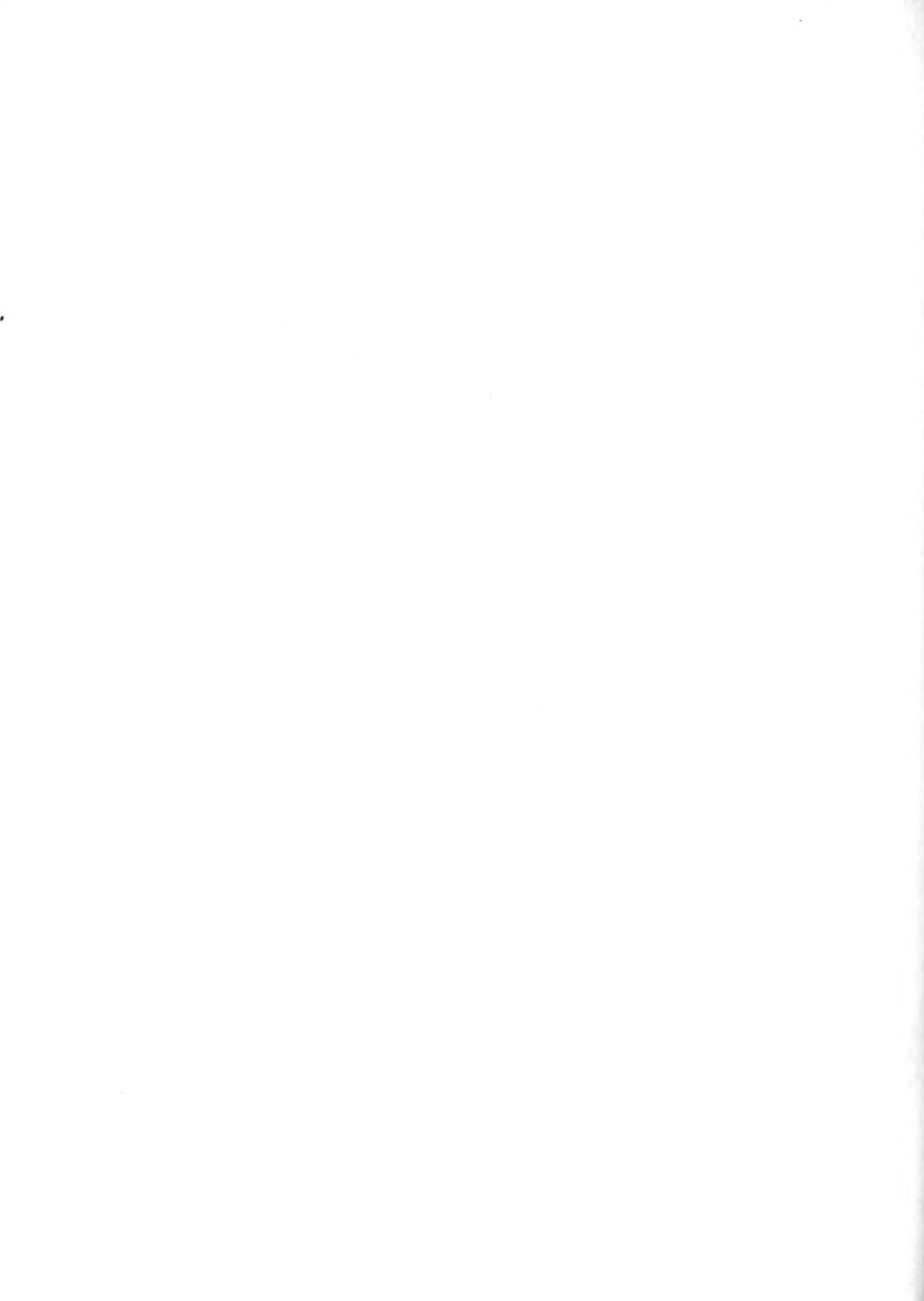
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THE BENIGNITY OF VENUS IN
THE VEGETABLE WORLD.

FIRST LETTER.

DEAR FORMAN, I am sorry that the stress
And ills of life have brought you weariness,
The more because your dark self bears within
The flame that long has been the bane of men
Who view the things around with piercing glance,
And love them quick to their own dire mischance ;
For slowly comes their answer, as the life
Of common things is slow ; and caution's rife
Begot of all the pain of all the days,
And eagerness is rare as happy lays.
But to assuage the turmoil of your heart
Is now the aim of my defective art
That yearns to make your tired attention glad

At what I shall set down in guise so bad,
That you will smile, first at your halting friend,
And after praise the sweetness of his end.

It is an ancient story that I tell
Of Her, the fount of life and light as well,
Great Venus, who has led the world along
Through time of gladness, and through time of wrong, 20
As we now call it who are far away,
Though suns were bright and marriage went alway.
'There never could have been, there never will
Be that all-doleful time that stories fill
With monsters, giants, ill-compounded gods,
Who fall asunder into dirty clods
Before the gaze of him that loves his child ;
Such things are not for men that, free and wild
As they may be, see all things bright and clear,
And, pleased with life, know not the face of fear. 30

Now is the hazel gay in hedge and wood,
While its long tassels pour a copious flood

Of sperm upon the scarlet-lippéd bud,
Careless what eyes may see the profuse kiss,
So bounteous that the tree scarce deigns to miss
The pieces plucked by rosy boy or girl,
Or greater limbs wrenched by the ruthless churl.
Immodest tassels and immodest lips !
Unknowing aught of hot and secret slips
Beneath bright stars ; for the quick blush of shame 40
Only with fear of death by violence came :
She-wolves that clip their lovers in a vice
Are helpless 'fore the hunter's avarice
Of blood, and therefore lure their mates away
To darksome coverts where their lust may play,
And end in sleep ; the rams embrace so quick,
'Tis love and leave me for their dames ; the thick,
Sharp sloe embowers the nest of birds ; the house
Shelters the love of woman and of mouse,
Fearful or pleased at the she-cat that cries 50
Through night's dark hall of her love's victories.

But slower flowers fear not any foe :
Their blossom plucked, plants do but stronger grow
To their next bout of love, when they shall show
What pleasure Venus takes in lusty flowers ;
For their fair hues are many as the hours
That fill the year ; nor is the sweet delight
That thrills mankind before their colour bright
An human thing alone. The eternal flies,
Dainty and gauzed as girls, are just as wise :
These quick and coloured ornaments of air
Stoop to adore the mute expanse more fair
Than their own carnival of restlessness,
And sleep at night amid the hues they bless.
Some men affirm 'tis but the hue of meat
That leads the flies to perch with eager feet
Upon deceitful feasts, that merest food
Attracts their sudden swoops ; but meat is good
To fly and man : and who shall dare to say
That what each loves is not his meat for aye ?

And many things are loved, while reason fails
A thousand times for once that it prevails
And holds its own. Dead reasons' chaffy sheaves
Litter the towns with unregarded leaves :
Love never dies. But 'tis enough to know
That gendering plants with colour are aglow,
And lure with beauty or with fruit the care
Of fly and man to ensure their increase fair.
They conjure up a brightness in man's face
And quicker movements in the insect race, 80
While men, birds, insects, happy rivals are
To thrust away from earth's bright coat the bar
To its renewal. Even border mountains now,
That erst repelled the invader with a brow
Of calm denial, have their granite scraped
By skilful gardeners ; and the rough blocks shaped
By storm and age cast a refreshing shade
On prize pentstemons, there in lines arrayed
By one who loves them ; while on plains below

Men buzz of pretty flowers that they grow, 90
Or sterner are about the wide-spread field,
Hedged and allayed with art and toil to yield
Bread and the pleasant fruit that brings to men
Health to be pleased and gender life again.
It is a happy consequence of toil
Upon the land that various shines the soil
With varied life ; for did the labour cease,
Monotony must lay a Roman peace
On forest dim and dank, where scanty beasts, 100
Infrequent flowers, shall meet the eye that feasts
On many colours ; nor shall warblers trill
The songs that ever earned the hush and thrill
Of ecstasy : for they are mites that love
A bounteous meal below, the sun above ;
And regions where the land bears various fruit
Enchanted are by the responsive flute
Of the brown bird that tells to nights in spring
The tale that poets never cease to sing,

In passages with such a pause between
As gives clear thought of what the sweet parts mean. 110
The Alps, that terrified the scourge of Rome,
Use their rough sides for the edelweiss's home
Whose woolly flowers, long kept, record the play
Of city folk that find their holiday
In travelling summarily to rose-flushed heights,
Straining religiously to uncommon sights,
Shuddering with easy awe at glaciers wide,
Or prattling of the sunsets they have spied,
Secure from dangers of the flood and fell
Because some engineers have laboured well. 120
A senate late sat in in a southern land
To guard a scarlet orchid from the hand
Of thievish dealers. And this land of ours
Contains a spacious home for the earth's flowers
That show to visitors from far and wide
Themselves by art and patience beautified.
There treasure, years and toil of man, combined

By the loving sureness of a nation's mind,
Have made elastic lawns, refreshing glades,
Sheltering recesses and protecting shades, 130
Rills, quiet ponds and torrid glassy domes,
Where tree and herb enjoy congenial homes
Year after year ; where not in vain is sought
The beauty of their loves unmarred by drought
Or storm. You will forgive these stories slight
Because they tell how pleasant is the sight
Of happy plants to men in every clime,
Of every colour and of every time,
Where human lives please many human eyes
And love of man brings love of all that dies. 140
The very worms in their blind sweep contrive
To keep the grass, torn up by force, alive ;
Down through the kindly earth they drag the roots,
Up towards the sun the withered stem re-shoots,
And bears upon its summit grateful fruits.
The tremor that the blushing maiden thrills,

When on her breast the youth lays daffodils
Or lilies, is not for the love that lies
Amid the radiance of the flowers' bright eyes :
She cares not for the fires that shoot flames forth 150
To the extremest disc-edge ; nor for the worth
That lies in pistils' or in stamens' head,
But loves alone the hangings of their bed,
Most woman-like. Yet flowers have been the sign
Through all the years that men and women pine
Or joy for love of one another. Why ?
Because their beauty is Love's drapery.
The soldier shining in his scarlet might
Who pleases maidens blushing in their white,
The lilies luring on the strong-winged moth, 160
The roses burning under damask cloth,
The violets bent with weight of purple robes,
The asters pushing forth their glistening globes,
The sunflowers staring at their god above,
Delight the world, for they are springs of love.

It is in Venus' month the world is young :
Then Love awakes and sweetest notes are sung.
Forth comes the sun, the plough, the horse, the hind,
Each in his turn a gracious earth to find :
The sower casts the seed with equal hands, 170
Brown as the land ; the admiring farmer stands
To see the work ; the odour of manure,
Brought from where sea-birds bred for years secure,
Fills nose and stomach, sweet as licorice,
Till gentle showers dissolve and spread the mess
For baby-wheat to suck : the lane below
Nurses in shade the dying mass of snow
Till lusty days pinch out its deadly white,
And little children filled with new delight
Run thither, free from mother's winter care, 180
To bask in sunshine and to breathe the air.
They pluck the primrose on the southern bank,
Pale in its beauty as its gaze is frank,
Patient withal of its lust's complex ways,

But growing weaker with the hotter days,
Till, overcome by summer's heat and glare,
Its flowers expire amid their increase fair ;
And leaves droop rankly, flaccid, out of tune,
In the great pomp and brilliancy of June,
As old men mumbling bend to sunny floors 190
When all the world is glad and out of doors.
But these are going to adorn a home,
Borne under children's laughter to their doorn
Of spreading joy instead of myriad seed
Produced, maybe, to die of very need ;
For small fresh space there is to keep alive
What joy kind eyes from teeming earth derive,
Yet Love, aye mindful of the whole world's bliss,
Brings forth excess of handsome flowers to kiss
And toy amongst themselves whose weaker fruit, 200
Falling on heedless crowds, dies ere the root
Have sucked the joy of earth, and fades away
Unconscious of the sun that shines alway.

Through orchard trees the young procession goes
Where Love enthroned on high cares not for foes,
So watchful here is man the sentinel
O'er the bright blossoms in their citadel
Of rugged trees, save when the treacherous frost
Attacks at night and stabs the gentle host—
Frost, black or white, the blossoms' name for death 210
That wars in vain, for Love still flourisheth,
And laughs at death and mocks at future care,
And lovely is the mirth of one so fair :
It conquers prudence both in man and tree,
And is the lover for eternity.
So are the moments of the blissful Spring
Filled with the motion of each beauteous thing
That travels helplessly to new delights,
Called Summer in their whole by happy wights
Who still see herb and tree aflame with love, 220
Day after day, around, below, above.
'Tis now the flower that makes the lover's bed,

'Tis now the flower that circles maidenhead ;
'Tis now the time that gardeners are glad
At flower-guests, surging bright-eyed, so mad
Are they with sheer desire. The tender rose
Makes mankind drunken with its joys and woes
In love, distilled to every passer-by
Who learns just then how hard it is to die ;
On brazen earth the pimpernel lies low 230
And swears its passion with metallic glow ;
Midsummer is when serried ranks of wheat
Half hide from anxious men their gendering heat,
And half reveal it in a dreamy haze
That crowns the field of long, laborious days ;
Red poppies flaunt their rank loves carelessly
And die, like harlots, soon and suddenly ;
Corn-cockle holds its simple stem erect
With martial stiffness : bryony deflect
Spreads its caresses o'er the thorn on high 240
And wafts its kisses to its mate near by ;

While brambles, profuse of their pink and white,
Promise the whole land's children sweet delight.
Is Venus tired? The lazy autumn shows
Her regnant still, but toying in repose ;
Well-pleased, she sees what pleasure has bygone
A present fruit, and languidly plays on.
Around the house she's helped by man indeed
Who adds in colour as he lessens seed :
Bold zinnia, dahlia, and chrysanthemum 350
Are brilliant ensigns of a cherished home,
While purple daisy and anemone,
Less cared for, blossom sad and modestly
Before their death's dark days ; each hedge and wood
Displays Love's colours in an apish mood
Of memory, like vain eldfeigning youth
With dull-eyed leer and courtesy uncouth ;
But sober passion in the wild dies not
Where ivy, easy in its long-lived lot,
Tardily crowns itself with clustered flowers 260

That now are nearly fruit, so scant the hours
For pretty dalliyings. Then winter comes apace,
When many an herb strains forward to the race
Of next year's bliss : a single day of rain
Deceives the daisies that begin again
Their many-headed kissings. False the start ;
And back they go to the post with yearning heart,
Flouted by bitter cold. The chickweed low
Is starred with blossoms white that gender slow,
But fill the little birds with wholesome meat 270
That keeps them warm till Spring's returning heat
Brings luscious tables for a tuneful breast,
And primroses to be by men re-blest.

Obvious and common are the things I write ;
Obvious and common is the broad daylight ;
On every side is spread the gentle green,
And gold of wheat hath every mortal seen.
These are the gifts a gracious Venus makes,
And blest is he who thanks before he takes. 279

Then, Forman, raise your eyes and outstretched hands ;
Thank her in star and sun and skiey lands
That set the flower and fruit their ordered times
And band the world with all-producing climes ;
Thank her again who permeates the earth
And makes it lovely to proclaim her worth.

March, 1892.

THE RITES OF VENUS.



SECOND LETTER.

DEAR FORMAN, still forgive this jingling rhyme
That now rings out for you a leisure time ;
Nor should you ever these twin sounds despise
As trivial art, like some that so advise,
For rhymes please most, and what is pleasant must
Be Life itself and raise man from the dust.
What is this life of ours but bliss on bliss
Whether the joy be meat, or drink, or kiss,
Or the soft bed where weary limbs repose,
Or the discomfiture of daily woes, 10
That, small or great, are pains begetting death
Unless we puff them off with strenuous breath,
Or sons' achievements, or a daughter's grace,

Or quick reflections of a wifely face,
Or loving memories of a parent's hearse,
Or duty's round, or song, or pipe, or verse?
May these rhymes please you : Truth, the other name
Of Pleasure's self, shall keep their living fame,
Truth that, like Pleasure, is the life of man,
Who must see clear to live, and is the fan
That sets the trust in human hearts aglow ;
Nay ! is the air in which we live and do.
But if plain words can lively things portray
And move the reader, those that Truth display
Atop of pleasant sounds must give delight
More than all other things that meet the sight.
Good rhymes for sermons true alone are fit,
For Truth and Pleasure is one mark to hit ;
'Twixt rhyme and reason is the bond confessed ;
Call the bond Truth and in its pleasure rest.
And when you come to faults in this my rhyme,
Condemn its reason and no farther climb,

20

30

But think its writer, in your friendly way,
With a desire to please has run astray.

Not long ago he called you to adore
Her that unceasing strews upon earth's floor,
Before all eyes, the riches of her grace
In flower and fruit and grass's spreading lace.
But she requires more than a sudden thought
From those who are glad to serve her as they ought : 40
Venus is Pleasure, Truth and Song combined ;
No less than man's whole life is to her mind
As a fit sacrifice before her shrine :
Then let the offering be yours and mine
Of life-long modesty, a smiling eye
And kindly will for all humanity.

There was in ancient times a famous man
Who all his peers in stately verse outran,
And Venus was the goddess he adored,
And she endowed him with the pregnant word ; 50
Yet was his worship tainted with an ire

That jarred the sweeping utterance of his lyre :
Contentious memory of the things he saw
Begot impatience of his Lady's law ;
While still he preached that nothing turns to naught
Grave old Religion's nothingness he sought,
And mad Lucretius smirched those deeds sincere
That might have made his parable a sphere.
—What is Religion but religious men ?
And when were men without their churches ? When 60
Did they forego their solemn march to fanes
Built by themselves with loving care and pains ?
Religion is men low before some shrine
That sires and mates decree to be divine ;
It is men interchanging kindly act
In forms made sacred by the firm compact
Of long experience. It is men prone
Before a God that is their very own,
A God that is their reverential part,
A God whose substance is the human heart. 70

So did Lucretius scorn his myriad peers
Who shaped his words, his thoughts, his hopes, his fears.
'Tis true he thought in Iphianassa's case
That men, religious, were unkind and base ;
But these sinned long ago, beyond compare
With those who breathed the civil Roman air,
If sin they did, unknown to Homer's song,
To add a tittle to the general wrong.
But he, as well as we, faint credence pays
To doubtful tales of ancient, doleful days :
Why learned he not this crime as peers of ours
Hear of a Jephthah's daughter in the hours
That men devote to worship of the past,
Snug in the fane where sleepy echoes last ?
Where who asks this or that ? Yet each one pays
A courtesy to tales of bygone days
That saw his fathers, full of ill and good,
Just like himself who yearns for loving brood.
Nor did the poet's fellows shake for fear

80

Lest their own maids should cause an equal tear ; 90
Nor did himself, devoted to the fair,
Remember that the sacrificers were
In quest of loveliest lady on the earth,
And deemed all nothing to their Helen's worth :
But he who made Religion far too tall
Might well expect it at a word to fall,
Whereas throughout the years, wights not above
Six feet in height walked, died in children's love,
And careful of the rites their fathers taught 100
Passed on the same to the fresh lives they'd got.
But some that think to teach our present day
Use speech as foully when they strive to say
That God is that of which folk have no sense,
And is the title for man's ignorance.
Foolish are these who struggle thus to show
Religions are the varying forms of *No* ;
Enticed by words, untrammeled by a fact

They brand as *No* long years of human act ;
And those that find plain *No* sufficient creed
Proclaim their *No* a very thing indeed. 110
'Tis plain the gods that peoples must adore
Are all compounded of their votaries' lore
Of act and sight ; and men of kindred cares
Find their lives mirrored in their common prayers.
For 'twas the soldier safe from many wars
Who lolled at ease and swore by lusty Mars ;
It was the lady sighing with desire
Who told to Venus all her hidden fire ;
The lucky robber half his booty brought
To Mercury as quick as thievish thought ; 120
While those who found their world was made of books
Chilled themselves stiff in cold Minerva's looks ;
Till, tired of gods in ever-growing crowd,
The world combined them and to one God bowed,
Who spread, with Jews, splenetic o'er the lands

Where men groaned loud between contending bands,
Or bought their lust and pillage off and, weak,
Saw in a tortured God their sorrows speak.

But still the Unity that men allowed
Showed various faces to a changeful crowd : 130

The subtle Grecian found it mixed of words
That drave their utterer like lash-armed lords,
And bowed himself, who had a double face,
Before the mystery of Tri-Une grace ;

While Italy, the dame of act and awe,
Enjoined obedience to the Church's law
And ruled the West ; nor when her bond was burst
By sturdy Northmen was the Godhead curst.

The sterner sort adored a direful face
And told his battles for the Jewish race, 140

When milder men in the old temples found
Him pleased with trodden ways and pleasant sound ;
And now that men live gentle-voiced and tame

Child-like their God is glad to be the same.
Let us then bow to Him that wide unfurled
Displays our brothers' knowledge of the world,
For Venus wills it so who brings us here,
By way of father's love and hope and fear,
To live our lives in easy-gliding lease
And guide our children in the way of peace. 150
What asks our Lady then? A little meed !
For cheerful faces is her greatest need ;
Good manners, too, she begs of every wight,
Nor smiles on fierce apologies of Right,
For Right is where a gentle pleasure reigns
And gentle deeds that lessen human pains ;
Nor does she ask of us a strenuous quest
For atoms or for causes unconfessed,
Since atoms, like the ever-living God,
Vary as men, or vanish at a nod. 160
No need now, Forman, to uplift your eyes

To find our Venus in the starry skies ;
With gracious mien she treads the pleasant ground,
Arrayed in flesh, and utters human sound :
Thank her with love for every man you meet,
And she shall bless you from a mercy-seat.

February, 1893.

THE KINDNESS OF VENUS IN
THE LIFE AND DEATH
OF MAN.

THIRD LETTER.

DEAR FORMAN, it is pleasant to forget
Even sometimes a task of love. And yet
I have no pleasure in the backwardness
That makes the value of this letter less,
For Death itself has driven my thought away
From Lady Venus and her potent sway ;
And she, displeased at my averted face,
Withdraws in part perception of her grace.
And how can I with easy quill indite,
Conscious of having shunned a work so light
As praise of her ? I did intend to pen
Her power o'er lives so free as birds and men ;
How the quick whitethroat through a summer's day

Wings to and fro in air a certain way
To where a narrow, nettle-bounded pit
Forbids his flight and scarce allows the flit
Of eager, entering wings ; how he must rise
And fall each even singing to the skies ;
What clothes the chaffinch with a smart attire
In Spring, and bids him swell the varied choir ; 20
What makes him pert, and elevate his crest,
Or bows him to the service of the nest ;
What drives asunder the harmonious throng
Of gentle linnets just as days grow long,
And sets each lone against the sinking sun
To triumph weakly for the day now done.

But Spring is past and birds are sad, and I
Can only think how men must live and die
And love ; and birds have little care for us
Who crawl below them melancholious 30
As, hot and swift, they cleave a purer air
Till, drunk with light, they condescend to care.

But still with joy we watch our neighbours' pranks
And kiss our wives and give the good God thanks.
It isn't hard to smile on lass and lad
When Love attacks them first and drives them mad
For joy. The poorest traveller may see
On stile or seat mutual felicity
Where the warm stripling shudders with the bliss
Of learning what is in a maiden's kiss 40
Who thinks of naught, bathed in her novel joy,
Bites with soft lips or plays at being coy,
And fears no watcher if he only smile
And strive to win their hearts with gentle wile.
She shares with glistening eyes her lover's story
Of tremors shy that ended in love's glory ;
And such a tale is everyone's delight
Since all have loved, remember, and have sight
For this new picture of old joy and pain,
That's painted lively in the quiet lane, 50
For this result of seasons' changeful strife,

The first bright blossom of the Tree of Life.

Time is when mother's lap is all the world
Till straight man stands with wistful arms unfurled
To grasp the wonders of the land of shows,
That proves to be a land of many woes ;
Yet through grave hurts and cries and sore distress
Does he not conquer it with eager stress ?
He joins himself with mates and seeks the streams,
And fills the woods around with little screams 60
As mimic ships of his to unknown lands
Glide in uncertain whirl, or when his hands
Wrest from the hedge or bank some novel prize
That brings rare sparkles to his mother's eyes ;
He chases bright-eyed birds from song to song,
And yet, a little child, he does no wrong ;
They safely watch him play the hunter's part,
And slyly they avoid his feeble dart :
Bold sports his father and his tutors teach
Wherein he learns to use his strength 'gainst each 70

Playfellow with fair courtesy. To fight,
To run, to leap, to swim, with measured might
Are his ; and, master of his strength and ire,
Modest he walks, the pearl of men's desire :
Time brings him books wherein he sees past years
Crowded with heroes ending sorrow's tears
With temperance mild and resolution high,
Closed in their mail by lady's stifled sigh ;
He dreams by night of what brave men have done
And plays their deeds beneath a mindful sun :
And Time too leads him to his manhood's height
When school-girls peep and fear the wondrous sight,
Till courage comes and out they dart their share
Of backward glances shot from faces fair,
And saucy words and dainty tricks they learn
From their own fear of inner needs that burn ;
But well he knows these mates of childhood's days,
And the familiar memory of their ways,
Their fibs and cheatings over woodland fruit,

Blurs these fair flowers with an earthly root : 90
He still laughs with them as a boy might do,
While each frank laugh is tart to them as rue.
Yet as he waxes, murmurs rise and fall
How woman's beauty holds a man in thrall ;
He deems it first vain noise and wonders why
A thing beflounced should make a strong man cry :
But bit by bit the tale falls in his ear
Like the long winds that make the green wood sear,
And then the stranger maiden brings the torch,
Gently unknowing what power she has to scorch, 100
And all the past of that well-nurtured youth
Burns fiercely in the flame of love and truth
And humble admiration, and his parts
Dissolve into a future of twin hearts
And fresh young lives that utter baby-cries
Of tiny misery that ever dies
In mother's carefulness and lullabies.
Forth every morn he goes to strenuous deed,

And every night he comes to reap his meed
Of tender looks from wife and rushing feet 110
Of children emulous to seize the seat,
The dancing, prancing saddle of his knee,
And just a taste of clamorous liberty.
Now every year he sees his children grow
Towards his own dear youth that he loves so ;
And as his forces wane, age's far sight
Backward and forward brings a dim delight,
The same that ushers in the nightly sleep
When men forget to laugh, or work, or weep.
This is man's life, his usual, common lot. 120

O happy man ! if only Death forgot
To strike him tremulous time after time
And rob him of the reason for a rhyme.
It lays him prone upon the funeral mound,
Listening and praying vainly for the sound
Never to leave the quiet lips below
That faintly smile up to his heavy woe,

'The seal of bygone love that still remains
To weave sweet duty out of ancient pains.
Yes! Forman, this cold Death that wounds so sore 130
Is the sure sign that our affections' store
Shall never wane. Sometimes your sudden thought
That your own dearest shall one day be naught
Must end in tender word and gentle glance,
The very alphabet of Love's utterance;
And you will yearn to keep the precious face,
And hold it hidden in a warm embrace:
Thus Death, the bitterest of Love's enemies,
Does but make Love advance in loving guise.
O Forman, Death is Love itself, I know, 140
And Love to live must sometimes mask as woe,
And hard it is for Love to suffer so.
Yet from the Death-like Love we take this gain,
To sorrow for and cure our neighbour's pain,
To walk with kindly mien 'midst fellow-men
And gratefully receive kind looks again.

And so from year to year we live and die
Within the favour of great Venus' eye.
And many gifts our Lady fashions meet,
A lovely home ; a carpet for our feet, 150
Bestrown with living ornaments that praise
Their bounteous Maker in bright-coloured ways,
Shining examples to us all to move
With smiling face along the path of love ;
A God that loves us since he proves to be
Our own affections' epitome,
Our father's image and our mates' desire,
Our country's reverence that must never tire ;
A loving woman glad to be our slave,
Her beauteous form a warm and sheltering cave 160
Wherein is nourished our undying part
That issues forth to cheer our waning heart
With the bright repetition of its youth
Bound on the way of pleasure and of truth.
What else then can I write but joyous words ?

And if I could I'd sing as do the birds ;
But there's one season fit for jingling lays,
And that is youth that leaps to easy praise ;
And I, my friend, who hold a weary pen
Now gladly hand it down to younger men.

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November, 1893.



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